FOIA Module

Project Overview

Multi-Agency FOIA Training
Department of Commerce

September 11, 2012

Presentation Objectives

- Provide background and status of the FOIA Module

- Address questions

- Invite interested parties to a demonstration (tomorrow: 9/12/12 (9:00 – 12:00 noon EST))
  Department of Commerce Auditorium

FOIA Module Vision

- Develop a cost effective, multi-agency, shared-service to assist EPA and any partner agencies meet their FOIA requirements, and

- Create a repository of publicly released FOIA records for reuse.

What is the status of the FOIA module?

- ✓ 10/28/11   Agencies reviewed and concurred with system requirements
- ✓ 11/30/11   Agencies finalized system functional requirements
- ✓ 01/19/12   Agencies reviewed interface
- ✓ 01/23/12   Partners initiated system construction
- ✓ 04/19/12   Partners demonstrate in-progress version of system for agencies
- ✓ 07/09/12   Partners conduct user testing
- ✓ 08/28/12   Partner training/implementation configuration
- ✓ 09/05/12   Deploy agency interface
- • 09/30/12   Deploy public interface

- **Estimated cost to deploy: $1.3M**
- **Estimated annual cost for Operations and Maintenance: $0.5M to $0.75M** (divided among participating partners based on a usage model under development)

How will the public use the FOIA module?

Submit a FOIA request

Track progress

Consult with FOIA staff

Search and view FOIA responses
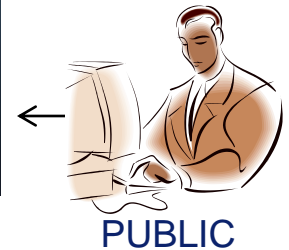
File Appeal

Capabilities

Search and view FOIA requests and responses
Single repository to search FOIA responses across agencies

Submit FOIA requests
Simple web form to submit FOIA request to many agencies
Create a user profile

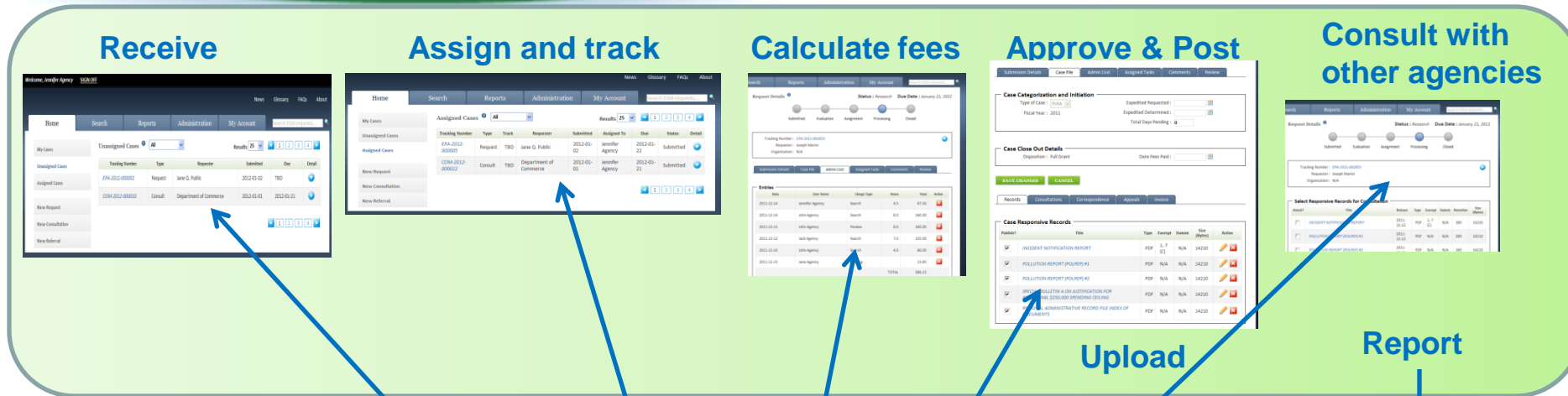**Track progress**
Automated tracking of FOIA requests

Communicate with Agency staff
Interact with agency staff to clarify questions

File an appeal
Simple web form to submit an appeal

PUBLIC

How will agencies use the FOIA module?

Receive

Assign and track

Calculate fees

Approve & Post

Consult with other agencies

Upload

Report

Capabilities

Receive public requests
 Each agency controls its data
Assign
 Assign FOIA request within agency
Track progress
 Automated tracking of FOIA requests
Upload, approve & post
 Agency staff can upload documents responsive to FOIA requests
 Agency can review / approve / post
Calculate fees
 Automatically calculate fees and generate invoices
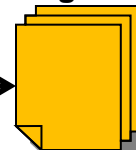**Consult with other agencies**
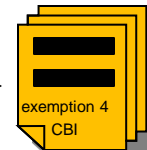 *Agencies can refer or consult on requests*
Report
 Automatically generates annual FOIA reports and internal reports

Identify responsive records using existing tools

Review / redact

exemption 4
CBI

What are the benefits of the FOIA module?

- **Initial Estimated Benefits**
  - Offers significant cost avoidance: estimated at $200 Million if adopted broadly over 5 years* (based on EPA and DOJ estimates)
  - Provides new capabilities to recapture effort expended in providing responses (electronic records repository, streamlined processing)
  - Is compatible with agencies' existing processes or tools (e.g., eDiscovery) to search, review, and redact responsive information
  - Increases transparency and potentially reduces future requests
  - Addresses strong public interest
  - Fulfills Administration goals: OpenGov, IT efficiency, reuse, simplify government services, lower costs

*(partnership is voluntary)

Statement of Support

- FOIA module commended in a statement commemorating the 46th Anniversary of the enactment of Freedom of Information Act (Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee, June 26, 2012).

- *I especially want to commend the Office of Government Information Services…for working with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Commerce for developing an online FOIA module to better meet their requirements under FOIA. This new FOIA program reaffirms the President's commitment to transparency in our government and the FOIA module will make government information more accessible to the American people.*